

SAG 1st Vice President Anne-Marie Johnson's Mid-Season Report

Given at the Hollywood Membership Meeting on June 27th, 2009



Welcome Screen Actors Guild Hollywood Division Members.

Thank you for taking the time out of your very busy schedules, especially on a Sunday, to come today. I am always so pleased and proud to see so many our Hollywood members at our membership meetings.

We have faced many challenges since our last Membership Meeting. We've also had achievements that our members must acknowledge and celebrate. But we are coming to a cross road within our industry that we also must acknowledge. Steady, decent paying jobs are hard to come by for most of us. Nearly impossible for many. But we have hope. It's what makes our industry so alluring yet frustrating. We all live with hope in our hearts that some day... Civilians don't get it. They can't understand why anyone would voluntarily subject themselves to the pure uncertainty that we face as actors every single day. When we aren't working, we are worrying and hoping for the next job. When we are working we are worrying and hoping to keep the job we have. It's a vicious cycle. The ups and downs, for many, can be debilitating. The second guessing, the waiting for the phone to ring, the "what ifs" and the "why didn't I" after every audition. It's crazy. We're crazy. But the majority of us wouldn't have it any other way. It's the life of an actor.

And the great thing about being a Screen Actors Guild member is the fact that the protections built within our contracts; the minimums, the mandatory P&H contributions, the protections of our working conditions... not only allows us to sweat the little stuff. But most importantly, our contracts allow us to concentrate on being artists.

We and other talent unions are being challenged by our employers. Our capability of earning a decent wage are and will continue to be compromised due to the ever changing process of how the industry creates, produces and delivers content to the world. By now we are all very familiar with the terms of our 2009 basic codified agreement. Over 77% of the voting members have spoken. 70% in the Hollywood Division. You have chosen to ratify the contract, based on, I believe, the HOPE of

having the opportunity to better it in the near future. We, the elected, want to thank the members who voted. You have “spoken” and SAG staff and leadership hear you loud and clear. 2011. It’ll take all of us to truly be prepared for 2011. It is my hope that the Hollywood, New York and Regional Branch division boards will be of one voice when the ultimate challenge comes. But it is in Hollywood, where we still generate the lion share of the earnings reported to the Guild, where we must truly band together to strategize and communicate if we have any plans of retaining our position as one of the the most respected and experienced talent unions in the industry. I know there are some who believe what our employers claim; That SAG is fractured, impotent, useless. We are not. We are the Screen Actors Guild. We represent some of the most talented and hard working artists in the world. We are still the union every young, hopeful, up and coming actor dreams to be a member of. But as union members and as your elected, we cannot become complacent, apathetic or myopic. Without unity within the boards, there is little to no hope to achieve unity within our membership. Protecting and strengthening our contracts should be priority number 1 for the Screen Actors Guild. We must do our best to take care of our own.

Which brings me to another challenge facing us all. The long term care unit of the Motion Picture and Television Fund Facility is closing, forcing the relocation of over 135 residents, greatly impacting over 200 families. Since the announcement of the closure, many long term residents have died due to their very fragile conditions and the stress and uncertainty of leaving their “homes”. It’s a horribly tragic situation that, in my opinion, should not be happening. But it is. Screen Actors Guild members are huge contributors to the MPTF. For 88 years the MPTF’s motto has been “We Take Care Of Our Own.” Well, it appears that some of “our own” are not being taken care of. If you haven’t done so already, please sign the petitions circulating outside of this meeting room. Volunteers from Saving Our Own, an ad hoc group made up of affected family members and supporters, are here today asking for your help and your signatures. Please don’t hesitate. It is my desire that the Hollywood board present an advisory motion to the National board, requesting that SAG take a public stand, supporting the fight to keep the Long Term Care facility open. I personally know how daunting and taxing it is to care for an ill parent. Many of you do. SAG must join in this righteous fight not only because it’s the right thing to do and that many of the residents were SAG members. But to ensure that when we, the future retirees of this industry,

need a clean, safe and loving place to live when we can no longer care for ourselves, there is just that place.

I want to congratulate my fellow national board members and dear friends, Sumi Haru and George Coe, on the honor that will be bestowed to them today. Both are union activists who have dedicated thousands of hours to this union. Sacrificing their careers and driving their love ones crazy. Congratulations Sumi and George. You both are truly deserving of this honor.